

NEWS RELEASE

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Pay parking returning to downtown Nanaimo streets

Summary

Beginning March 2, 2026, free street parking downtown will come to an end. Spaces that were historically metered and converted to 2-hour free parking, will be restored back to pay parking zones.

Once pay parking on downtown streets is reinstated, the same fees as before will be in effect: \$0.25 for 12 minutes and \$1.25 for each hour. Parking after 5 p.m. and all day Sundays along downtown streets will remain free. In addition to the current curbside pay kiosks that can be found downtown, the City is adding mobile payment options with Hotspot, the same mobile pay option used for the on-street pay parking near the hospital.

For information on parking, visit the [Parking section on the City's website](#).

Strategic Link: The Design Commercial: Downtown Reimagined project, an action item from the Downtown Mobility Hub Project and informed by City Plan, advanced the plan for more effective management of on-street parking demand downtown.

Key Points

- Pay parking in commercial areas like downtown is an effective way to manage parking demand, especially for on-street (or curbside) parking.
- City staff undertook the Downtown Mobility Hub project in 2019, which included a study on parking needs and priorities. The result showed that while there was sufficient parking downtown, there was a need to balance higher and lower demand areas.
- Parking after 5 p.m. and all day on Sundays along downtown streets will remain free.
- Starting March 2, visitors to downtown can scan the Hotspot QR codes or download the app to conveniently pay for parking with their smartphones on downtown streets.

Quotes

"Reinstating pay parking downtown helps us manage demand and ensure spaces are available for visitors when they need them. We have also added convenience to your parking experience with the HotSpot app, which makes it easy to pay right from your phone."

Bill Sims
General Manager, Engineering & Public Works
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- The free parking initiative for two levels of the Bastion parkade that was put in place on Oct. 1, 2024 to bring customers downtown during Phase 1 of Commercial Street construction will also end on March 2, 2026.
- The downtown core has had pay parking for both City-owned parkades and on-street parking for decades. In 2019, repeated vandalism made it no longer cost-effective to maintain the meters in place so they were removed and replaced with two-hour limit parking.

Continued... Pay parking returning to downtown Nanaimo streets

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